



PSC NEWS

Missouri Public Service Commission

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PSC STAFF FILES REPORT AND COMPLAINT IN KANSAS CITY NATURAL GAS INCIDENT

Jefferson City (August 29, 2002)---The Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission has concluded its investigation and has filed a Gas Incident Report regarding a December 10, 2001, natural gas explosion in Kansas City, Missouri. The explosion, near the intersection of Buchanan Avenue and 32nd Avenue, occurred in an underground natural gas pipeline vault, which is an underground space containing pipelines, valves and regulators. Two contract workers for Missouri Gas Energy (MGE) were injured in the incident.

As a result of its investigation, the PSC Staff has filed a complaint against MGE alleging the natural gas company violated three Commission rules which, Staff alleges, contributed to the incident.

Staff alleges MGE violated Commission rules by failing to take steps to minimize the danger of accidental ignition of natural gas in any structure or area where the presence of gas constitutes a hazard of fire or explosion. Staff alleges precautions to sample the vault atmosphere prior to entering the vault was not made by MGE or contractor employees.

In its complaint. Staff also alleges MGE violated Commission rules by failing to properly train personnel on procedures when entering a MGE vault housing natural gas pipelines, ensuring that the individual or individuals had adequate working knowledge and the proper equipment to perform such procedures. Third, the PSC Staff alleges MGE violated Commission rules by not ensuring that all work completed by its consultants and contractors complies with PSC pipeline safety requirements.

Staff's report indicates that the probable cause of the incident resulted from a contractor's impact wrench igniting a flammable atmosphere that was present within MGE's utility vault. According to the report, natural gas escaping from minor leaks on company facilities, located within the vault, was present

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and contributed to the flammable atmosphere.

In its complaint, the PSC Staff has asked the Commission for authority to go to circuit court to seek penalties against MGE. If the case goes to court, the court will ultimately decide whether there should be penalties assessed and the amount.

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